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Window Security

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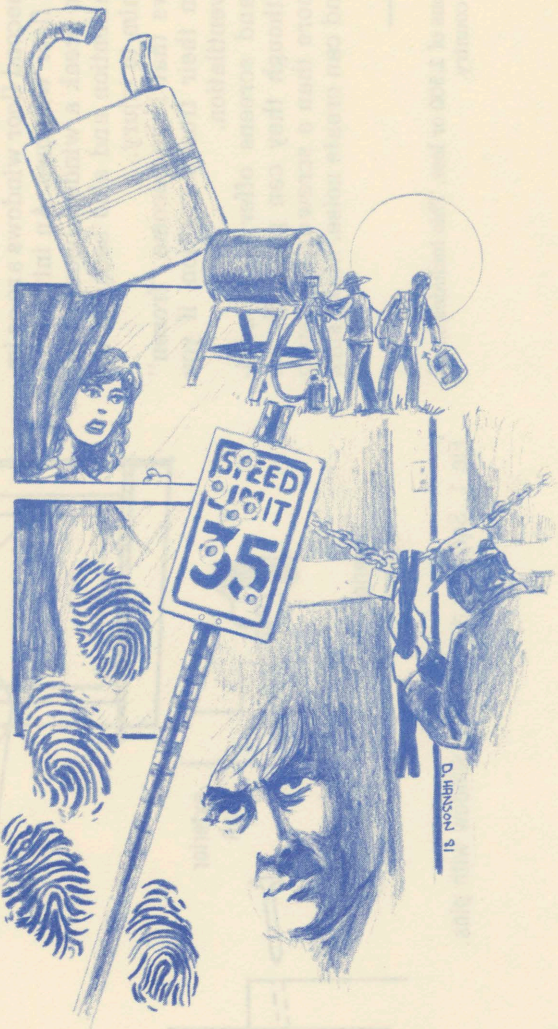
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Window Security



Rural Crime Prevention Project
Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University, Brookings
in cooperation with
University of South Dakota, Vermillion

Window Security

Risk—it's something we accept. If we're only running to the neighbor's, or out to the field, or downtown, few of us would shut the house up tight if we needed the breezes to cool the rooms.

We temper that risk—of a burglar crawling through an open window—somewhat by the fact that we live in South Dakota. Most of us know our neighbors, and know they're watching out for our welfare just as we watch out for theirs. Most of us know if there's a "crime wave;" word gets passed if prowlers have been seen.

But our sense of security may make us careless. Less than half of us in rural* South Dakota lock our windows, according to a recent survey.

Rural South Dakota has a comparatively low crime rate—about half the national average. But that rate increased 17% from 1972 to 1979, and that's only the reported crimes. Burglary is one of the most common offenses in rural South Dakota; it occurs more often in the country than in towns.

Think about the windows in your home. There are those in spare rooms that you don't even look at for a week or so at a time. Are they locked? There are those in the main living areas. Do you shut and lock them, at least when you'll be gone for some time or at night?

Yes, even locked windows can be broken and entered easily. But law enforcement officers tell us that detection is increased if you can delay an intruder, if you can force him to work where he can be observed, and if he will need to make noise or attract attention.

Secure the windows that you don't use. That concentrates your attention on the ones you'll forget less easily. And gather your tools—a couple of nails and a broomstick—to burglar-proof your windows.

First-aid methods to help prevent entry

- Routinely latch or lock **all** windows. The basement and accessible second floor windows are as important as your first floor windows. An intruder is generally reluctant to break a window because the noise could attract attention and also because the sharp edges expose him to injury.

- Leave all windows that have become "frozen" shut from painting in their frozen position, if you don't need them for ventilation.

- Storm windows and screens offer some additional protection. Although they can generally be removed with little more than a screwdriver, such removal takes time and can create noise. Make sure

that all screens and storm windows are properly secured.

- Window panes should be periodically checked and glazed as necessary. Putty deteriorates with age and exposure, making removal of panes relatively easy with no more than a pocketknife.

More security for specific windows

Double hung windows

Double hung or sash windows (two panels, one or both of which slide up and down) can be easily jimmied open when only a latch holds the window shut, particularly if the window is loose fitting.

A simple but effective method for securing these windows is to drill, on the inside, one hole on each of the sides, left and right, of the closed window frames. After the holes are drilled, insert a metal pin or nail. This locks the frames together (Fig. 1).

This method is effective because burglars are reluctant to break windows and make noise. Breaking the glass in many sash windows (especially those with smaller panes) will still deter entrance, because it will be difficult to find and remove the pins.

Make sure you do not drill the hole all the way through the exterior sash. If you can, conceal the pins as much as possible. The holes should be drilled at an angle so the nails do not drop out.

A second set of holes about 2 inches above the first set will allow you to open the window for ven-

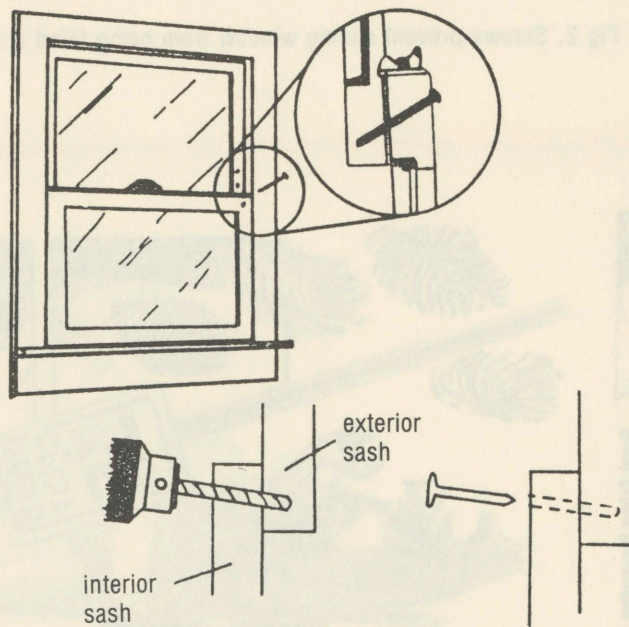


Fig 1. Secure a double hung window with pins.

* Rural refers to populations of 2,500 or less. This includes small towns as well as the open country.

tilation although it will still remain secure. There should be enough clearance in the holes so the pins can be easily removed from the inside.

Sliding glass windows

A sliding glass window is lifted into position when installed, and can be just as easily lifted from the track and removed by an intruder.

For protection against removal of a sliding glass window, install screws or bolts as illustrated in Fig 2. These should be adjusted so that the window barely clears them when it slides open. Now the window can't be lifted out.

If the window slides on the inside track, place a metal or wooden rod or broomstick (commercially called a "Charlie Bar") in the sliding track to prevent the window from being forced open.

Some sliding windows may also be secured with a metal pin in the same fashion as for sash windows.

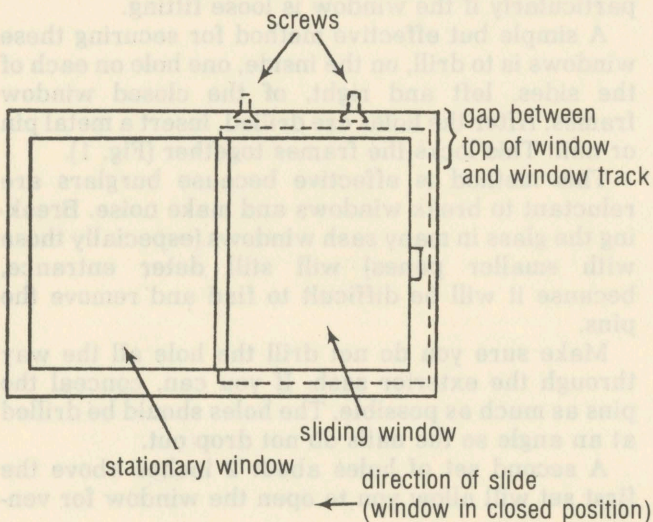


Fig 2. Screws prevent sliding window from being lifted out.

Remember, the pin hole should be drilled at a downward angle to prevent the pin from dropping out.

Casement windows

Casement windows are either hinged at the top, bottom, or side, and usually have a latch to keep them shut. To secure the latch, drill a hole through the latch handle and window frame. Insert a pin when the window is closed.

If the casement window is gear or crank operated, there are several options. The first is to remove the crank handle when the window is closed. The second is to drill a small hole in the housing and the shaft of the crank, and insert a pin in the hole. This will prevent the handle from being turned.

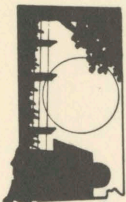
Commercial locks

A variety of commercial key-operated locks are available for windows. A key locked window keeps the intruder from reaching in and unlatching it. This method is more expensive than the window frame pins. However, some people may find the key-operated locks more desirable.

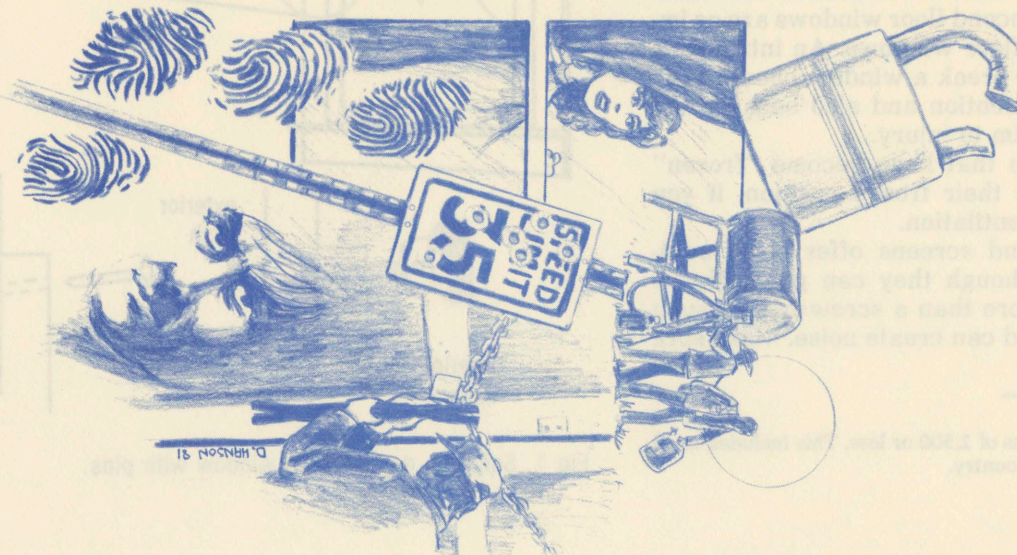
For more information on crime prevention, contact your local law enforcement officials or check with your county Extension agent.

Prepared by J.L. Faltemier and R.D. Mendelsohn with the assistance of D.A. Crotchett, Rural Sociology Department, SDSU. Survey data was supplied via the Statistical Analysis Center's publication of "Crime victimization in South Dakota," J. Villone, project director, and a Title V grant for an investigation of rural crime prevention, D. Dahlin, USD, project director.

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